

Mental Health in Schools Community Partnership

Lessons Learned

As part of the grant deliverables, we would like to hear about some of the lessons learned through your experiences working on the Mental Health in Schools Partnership. This will be showcased in a web-based companion guide upon completion of the grant requirements. We appreciate and value your honest feedback on this process, so please share unreservedly. For example, if you had great community support, this is a great venue to share. Conversely, if you had difficulty gaining administrative or parental support, please feel free to explain why, so that we may clearly depict what others may come across in following the same process. This will assist us as we begin to disseminate the work to other districts throughout the state. Thank you in advance for your hard work throughout this process and taking the time to complete the document.

The Lessons Learned Document is separated into 5 components: Data Assessment, Partners, Support, Outcomes, and Future Plans. There are a series of questions associated with each topic. Please feel free to separate your answers into the 5 components to share your process.

- I. Data Assessment: What were the tools you used? Were they user friendly? Time intensive? Was the data you received helpful? Were you able to use it and if so how did it help you? Was some of the data “disposable?” If so, what were those items?
The Healthy Schools Report Card was user friendly and the data was helpful as was the processing of the results through our local steering committee for this grant. It helped identify gaps.
- II. Partners: Who served as a partner to you through this process? Were they a new partner? If they were an established partner, did this process strengthen your relationship? How? Explain the process in establishing new partners. How did they respond to this grant process?
The Community Mental Health Authority Executive Director was our main partner. One of the main positives of this grant was the relationship we were able to establish with the director and CMH. The monthly meetings were the forum to establish additional relationships with local agencies, parents and other interested parties. The partners, especially parents, were thrilled to have the opportunity to address and work on this issue which many recognized as a great need.
- III. Support: Did you receive support from your school? Community? Others? Please specify the positions of those who provided you with support on this initiative within the district and community. Please describe how you were able to get their support. Was it difficult or easy? Are there recommendations you can offer on ways to generate support with these various representatives?
(Suggestion: create a list of supporters/positions and rate on a scale of 1-5 how supportive they were)

The support received was generally excellent. The 'official side' of our county juvenile court was not as actively involved as we would have liked. A representative from their prevention arm was moderately involved. However, our district court was very actively involved and supportive. Our general experience was positive. Since our grant facilitator is a school district administrator and other administrative school staff were on the committee also, that helped increase the support from the necessary school officials. We had active involvement from the community coalition which represents many sectors in the community, the county health dept's substance abuse prevention office, mental health agencies, and the county mental health crisis and assessment center were also very actively involved in the committee and grant process.

- IV. Outcomes: Describe some of the benefits that have come from your work on this grant. Provide any qualitative and/or quantitative data. In addition, please provide any drawbacks you experienced throughout this process.

Benefits: Increased collaboration with community mental health agencies, especially CMH and the mental health crisis and assessment center. They are now working with the district court to improve mental health services. We not only have the development of a relationship between the school district and CMH, but a collaborative agreement is in place to assist our support staff in accessing services more efficiently. The referral procedures we developed are being considered for other purposes such as reducing the number of long-term suspensions.

Drawbacks: The grant provided the opportunity to address a much needed process and as a result was very well received by school staff and parents – those most aware of the need. The only drawback I can site might be that since we are a large district, it takes longer to complete awareness and implementation.

- V. Future Plans: What are your future plans in providing services and expanding reach?

The referral procedures and collaborative agreement have assisted our support staff in having a uniform process that was not available before. The collaborative agreement also provides opportunities for problem solving should the process for accessing public mental health services break down in any way. They have paved a natural route for continuing the partnership into the future and through staff changes on either side.